

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A solid medium for culturing microorganisms, the solid medium containing a cellulose gel as a medium-solidifying component, which is a porous gel-like material obtained by heating and dissolving cellulose in aqueous thiocyanate salt solution, and subsequently cooling and solidifying the resulting solution.

Claim 2 (Original): A solid medium according to claim 1, where the crystallization degree of the cellulose gel is 5 to 70 %.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A solid medium according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, where the molecular weight of the cellulose used is 10,000 to 2,000,000.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A solid medium according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 3~~, where the cellulose gel is a porous cellulose gel structure with a cellulose backbone and at a cellulose concentration of 0.01 % or more.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A solid medium according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 4~~, where the cellulose gel is a porous gel-like structure at a porosity of 50 % or more.

Claim 6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium, ~~including~~ comprising the steps of dissolving or swelling cellulose dispersed in a solvent by mechanical mixing ~~and/or~~, heating or mixing and heating, subsequently solidifying the

resulting cellulose by cooling ~~and/or~~, solvent removal or cooling and solvent removal and permeating nutrient components into the cellulose.

Claim 8 (Original): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium according to claim 7, including dissolving cellulose dispersed in a solvent by heating, subsequently solidifying the resulting solution by cooling to remove the solvent component, and permeating nutrient components into the resulting cellulose.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium according to claim 7 ~~or 8~~, where the solvent is an aqueous solution of an alkali metal salt or alkali earth meal salt of thiocyanic acid.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 7 ~~through 9~~, where the solvent is an aqueous solution of calcium thiocyanate.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 7 ~~through 10~~, where the solvent is an aqueous saturated solution of calcium thiocyanate and the heating temperature is 70 to 200 °C.

Claim 12 (Original): A method for culturing a microorganism or a cell, including culturing a microorganism or a cell on the surface of a solid medium using a cellulose gel as a medium-solidifying component.

Claim 13 (Original): A method for culturing a microorganism according to claim 12, where the microorganism to be cultured on the solid medium using the cellulose gel is a microorganism in extreme environment.